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# THISTLEDOWN.

BY

M. E. W.

*Mary E. Wood*

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ILLUSTRATED.

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LIKE airy whirls of thistledown,  
That summon up before the sight  
Of close-kept toilers in the town  
Green fields beflowered with delight,  
Go, little rhymes ; and let your flight  
Hint at sweet-scented winds that blow  
Over the meads in summer-tide,  
And at the posy songs that grow  
On prouder pages, all aglow  
With purple pomp, and scarlet pride !



THISTLEDOWN.

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THISTLEDOWN.



THISTLEDOWN.

LA CRÉPUSCULE.

THE twilight deepened into gloom,  
A slender moon slipped up the sky,  
And through the purpling lilac bloom  
Peered down into the silent room  
Where we two loitered—she and I.

Lightly the breeze stole in and stirred  
The red-gold tangles of her hair,  
And in the distant copse we heard  
The cry of some belated bird  
Blown softly out upon the air.

THISTLEDOWN.

A spell was on us, strange and sweet—

Too sweet for words, too strange for tears;  
Our tender glances dared not meet,  
For in our hearts there throbbed and beat  
A hundred hopes—a thousand fears.

And so we sat, apart, alone,

With cheeks that burned, we knew not why,  
Nor guessed that as the hour crept on  
A flash of wings had come and gone,  
And Love himself had passed us by.



THISTLEDOWN.

ONNE MY TREWE LOVE—HER NAUGHTIE WAIE.

(After Herrick.)

MY Love has Lippes of Redde Delight,  
Where Thrifty Bees doe Sippe & Taste  
To Sweet Excess, lest She Sholde Lette  
Soe much Rare Honey goe to Waste.

Yett whenne I fain wolde Steal A Kisse,  
She Puttes me off & Runnes Awaie,  
& now & Thenne, ye Pretty Rogue!  
Lookes Backe to Mocke atte my Dismaie.

THISTLEDOWN.

MISTRESSE PEG—HER CRUELTYE.

(After Herrick.)

WHENNE Mistresse Peggy Walkes Abroade  
Toe Shew her Brave Attyre,  
She Setts her Image inne ye Hearte  
Of Any yt maie Spye Her,  
& Hastening Gallants Bow & Begge  
Yt She will Chuse A Squire,  
Till Envious Maides Putt onne Disdayne  
& Push a-Poutinge by Her.

Butt Mistresse Peg Trippes onne Her Waie  
Wth everie Ribbon Flyinge,  
& will have None of Fop or Beau  
For alle Theyre Prayers & Sighinge.





THISTLEDOWN.

Alack, yt She Sholde Be Soe Colde  
(Ye Gallants Joyne inne Cryinge),  
Toe Toss Her Head atte everie Swaine  
& Give Him harsh Denyinge!

THISTLEDOWN.

AU VOLEUR! AU VOLEUR!

BOY Cupid furled his dainty wings,  
And spent with wanton glee  
He laid him down to doze and dream  
Beneath the greenwood tree.

Miss Julia, singing as she went,  
Passed by that way and spied  
The rosy traitor fast asleep,  
His idle bow beside.

With mischief twinkling in her eye,  
She bent her down and kissed  
His lips and left a posy in  
His pink and dimpled fist,

THISTLEDOWN.

Then tripped away ; but first she took  
The pretty gilded toy  
That makes such mischief in the hands  
Of Venus' roguish boy.

Now Love bereft bewails his loss  
The wide green world around,  
While Julia laughs and well employs  
Her ill-got power to wound.

THISTLEDOWN.

CONTRE-TEMPS.

A RUFFLED gallant, trim and trig,  
With silver buckles on his shoon,  
Went idly down the dusty road,  
And trolled, the while, a lover's tune.

Sweet Mistress Peg, across the way,  
Sat at her lattice peeping thro',  
And in her silly heart made sure  
She saw a suitor come to woo.

So up she rose and decked her out  
All in her crimson padesoy,  
And on her dainty dimpled chin  
Set straight the patch and laughed for joy.







THISTLEDOWN.

Yet when she looked a second time,  
Alack, she sighed and looked no more,  
But railed at Fate and overturned  
Her tambour frame upon the floor,  
  
For in the grassy mead beyond,  
Behold, the faithless cavalier  
Made merry with the miller's maid  
And whispered secrets in her ear.

THISTLEDOWN.

IN APRIL.

O THE day was dark and the day was cold,  
And the day was dull and dreary,  
And the wind swept down from the withered wold,  
And the springtime lurked in the dingy mould  
Till the world and I were weary;  
And I wandered to and I wandered fro,  
And I wandered into the meadow,  
Till I stood where the early violets grow  
Till a step came up from the path below,  
And he told me—my life broke into glow,  
And the chill fled and the shadow!

O the breezes came and the breezes went,  
And merrily danced beside us,

THISTLEDOWN.

Around and about us the blue sky bent,  
And the sunshine laughed as if it meant  
    To kiss since it could not chide us.  
And the birds sang here and the birds sang there,  
    And the birds sang all together,  
For the bliss that was mine spread everywhere,  
And the world grew green and the world grew fair,  
And the breath of blossoms hung in the air,  
    And lo! it was April weather!

THISTLEDOWN.

BETTY.

BETTY'S the veriest coquette  
That since the days of Circe  
Has made a trade of breaking hearts  
And steeled her own to mercy;  
For when I wooed her last July  
With hot, impassioned phrases,  
She laughed a saucy "No!" and fell  
To pelting me with daisies.

To-day she promised to be mine,  
And owned with pretty smiling  
To all the snares her art had laid  
For me and my beguiling.

THISTLEDOWN.

And—Cupid, what think you of this?—  
    She vows her former flouting  
Was but a trick to prove me true,  
    And end her woman's doubting!

THISTLEDOWN.

MY LADY'S PAGE.

(Rondeau.)

MY Lady's page hath purple eyes  
Wherein a drowsy passion lies,  
And lips whose sweetness doth eclipse  
Such honey-dew as Cupid sips  
From chalice-buds in Paradise.

Lightly among her train he trips,  
And blown from pinky finger-tips,  
Her kiss proclaims him where it flies  
My Lady's page.







THISTLEDOWN.

Some sprite hath taught him that he slips  
Into her heart and therefrom strips

The hoarded sweets with bold emprise.

What wonder then that great and wise  
Do envy where he sings and skips—

My Lady's page.

THISTLEDOWN.

ONNE YE HILL-TOPPE.

After Herrick.

'T WAS onne ye Toppe of Harley Hill,  
    & I, yt Begged A Posy,  
From my Trewe Love, Looked uppe & Spyed  
    Ye Dimpled Mayde alle Rosy.  
She Pluckt ye Flowre yt I Besought  
    & Tossed to me wth Laughter,  
Thenne Fledde awaie across ye Fieldes  
    Till I inne Haste Ranne After,  
& from ye Redde Rose of Her Lippes,  
    Yt She hadde fayne Denied me,  
Snatcht xx Kisses Softe & Sweete,  
    & soe She Satisfyed me.

THISTLEDOWN.

O BONNY BEE.

O LUSTY, brown, gold-belted bee,  
Thou that hast sought the honeyed cell  
Of amaranth or asphodel  
To suck thy fill of spicery—  
Thou happy vagabond, make haste  
And hide thee in the lotus-bloom,  
That droops upon her breast to see  
More ivory whiteness than its own.

There is a palace faint with rich perfume  
Where, till the summer day is flown,  
Thou shalt hold revelry and taste  
Such nectar as must surfeit thee;

THISTLEDOWN.

But if in thy sweet pilfering  
Thou feel her bosom thrill for me,  
Leave off thy feast, and on swift wing  
Bring the glad news, O bonny bee!

THISTLEDOWN.

O SWEET SOUTH WIND.

O SWEET South Wind, I saw you twist  
Your fingers in her soft brown hair—  
My eyes were on you when you kissed  
Her ruddy lips and all the rare  
Round loveliness of cheek and chin,  
And Envy twitched me then and there.

For O, South Wind, if I had been  
So close beside and she so fair,  
Methinks I might have peeped within  
Her heart to mark me if she wear  
My name upon the naughty list  
Of those she destines to Despair.

THISTLEDOWN.

COMMENT CHOISIR?

AS she loitered by the roadside  
Where the sweet-briar grows,  
Betty plucked for her adorning  
One pale, pinky rose.

In her shining hair she placed it  
With a careless grace,  
Where it drooped and nodded slyly  
Till it touched her face.

And the burly bees approaching  
Hidden sweets to seek, -  
Could not choose between two roses—  
One was Betty's cheek.







THISTLEDOWN.

AT SEA.

I LAUNCHED my boat, my little boat,  
With sails of gold and blue,  
Out on the sea whose mighty depth  
And breadth I never knew.

I watched it drift far out of sight  
With all the precious hoard  
Of love and peace and trust and joy  
That I for years had stored.

I waited by the water-side  
For many a summer's day  
To meet and greet on its return  
The boat I sent away.

THISTLEDOWN.

But though the West is flecked with sails,  
And ships float up the bay,  
White-winged and laden with more wealth  
Than e'er they took away ;

And though my eyes are dim with tears,  
And all my hope is gone,  
Still here upon the dreary shore  
I watch and wait alone—

For my little boat, my pretty boat,  
With sails of gold and blue,  
Still wanders on the wide, wide sea  
Whose breadth I never knew.

THISTLEDOWN.

MAID PHILLIS.

MAID Phillis twined her yellow hair  
With gay gold daffodillies,  
And dropped a curtsey where she stood  
Among the meadow lilies.

“Marry, good sir,” she cried to me,  
“And mind you in your straying,  
Lest mischief trip you by the heels—  
For Love is out a-Maying.

“An hour ago he went this way,  
And look how he bewitched me—  
He pulled me here, he pulled me there,  
And by the kirtle twitched me.

THISTLEDOWN.

“ See, here’s the rent the urchin made  
In this my gown of scarlet!  
I’faith, I would I had him here—  
The saucy, smooth-tongued varlet!”

So she bewailed with tearful sighs,  
And bade me heed her warning,  
And so I hied me on my road,  
All on a sweet May morning.

But when I reached the king’s highway  
And looked where first I spied her,  
Lo! Phillis sat and sewed her gown,  
With Love curled up beside her!







THISTLEDOWN.

A RONDO OF YE HIE WYNDE.

(After Herrick.)

YE Wanton Wynde, yt Biteth Colde,  
Inne most Unseemlie Sporte & Bolde,  
Dothe Lifte A greavous Dust yt Flyes  
Inne Mistresse Marjorie her Eyes  
Soe She maie nott ye Pathe Beholde.

Yett inne ye Waie yt windinge Lyes  
Ye Gallant sorelie Tryed likewyse,  
Wth Peevish Wordes wolde Gibe & Scolde,  
Ye Wanton Wynde.

THISTLEDOWN.

Ye Frolick Breeze ys Plighte Espyes  
& dothe A naughtie Pranke Devyse;  
& Mistresse Marjorie is Rolled  
Into ye Gallant's Claspe & Folde,  
Wheyre She alle Redde Berates wth Sighes  
Ye Wanton Wynde.

THISTLEDOWN.

VÆ VICTIS.

SHE hummed beneath her breath and dreamily  
Gay bits of ballad and romance,  
And, where her cheek just rounded creamily,  
A lurking dimple peeped askance.

She swayed a fluffy fan provokingly  
Before the mischief of her eyes,  
And bade me recollect, half jokingly,  
Who tilts with Love Love-conquered dies.

She said farewell, and said it pettishly,  
Yet viewed my broken heart with pride,  
And whispered to the end, coquettishly—  
“Love’s fickle—and the world is wide.”

THISTLEDOWN.

BALLADE OF MILADI.

SHE came, and the roses that lay on her breast  
Were ruddy and rich and sweet at the core,  
As they rose and fell in a tangled nest  
Of the lace on the Paris gown she wore;  
And the gleam of its satin curled white on the floor  
Through the Court Quadrille, and a fragrance blew  
From a fan that a brodered legend bore—  
*“L'Amour fait beaucoup, mais l'Argent fait tout.”*

And lightly a tremulous pink caressed  
The clear pale curve of her cheek as o'er  
The rhythmic throb of the music's zest  
Crept the sound of an earnest voice and swore





THISTLEDOWN.

A love that was life to her life—and more ;  
But the fan still fluttered its gay frou-frou,  
And flaunted its warning of gold-wrought lore—  
“*L'Amour fait beaucoup, mais l'Argent fait tout.*”

Ah, then was Miladi put to her test !  
And she, who had broken hearts by the score,  
Drooped lower the dusk of her lashes lest  
Her eyes should betray the passion that tore  
Through her turbulent thoughts ; but yet as before  
She laughed till Love was Despair as she flew  
Her fan with its cynical screed of yore—  
“*L'Amour fait beaucoup, mais l'Argent fait tout.*”

THISTLEDOWN.

ENVOI.

What though Miladi may sometimes deplore  
Her *mauvais quart d'heure*, as all of us do?  
Is not she the Duchess of St. Dinore?

*"L'Amour fait beaucoup, mais l'Argent fait tout!"*



THISTLEDOWN.

TO BETTY.

(Villanelle.)

WHEN Betty's dimples come and go,  
And laughter loiters in her eyes,  
Who cares which way the wind may blow?

For Cupid's sweet self is fain to strew  
His way with quaint enamored sighs  
When Betty's dimples come and go,

And watching Beauty's piquant show,  
Youth, puffed with bold presuming, cries :  
"Who cares which way the wind may blow?"

THISTLEDOWN.

Enchanted Age becomes a beau,  
And pays his court with new emprise  
When Betty's dimples come and go,

While Wisdom, if she but bestow  
One smile, in needless haste replies :  
“ Who cares which way the wind may blow ? ”

But who is wise ? And who can know  
That Cruelty puts on disguise  
When Betty's dimples come and go ?  
Who cares which way the wind may blow ?

THISTLEDOWN

SERENADE.

O HAPPY stars that lean all night  
Down from the stretch of purple skies,  
To keep my Heart's Beloved in sight,  
Where deep in maiden dreams she lies—  
Her dear hands folded in a prayer,  
And Sleep's dull touch upon her eyes.

Shine out, and shed your hallowed light  
Around her rest in watchful wise,  
Till in the distant East the bright  
Gold radiance of the dawn shall rise  
To bring her forth, that earth may wear  
Once more the joys of Paradise!

THISTLEDOWN.

RONDEAUX.

I N gay rondeaux the poet sends  
Blithe messages to absent friends,  
Twisting his jest and quaint conceit  
Till in a deftly-measured beat  
His merriment with music blends.

The lover eagerly expends  
The skill that vivid passion lends  
To frame the vows his lips repeat  
In gay rondeaux.

Ah me! I would that those who greet  
These bits of verse as indiscreet,

THISTLEDOWN.

Could know that genius which pretends  
To loftier lyrics often ends  
With matching rhymes and moulding feet  
In gay rondeaux.















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